

Jeremy Corbyn speech at Chatham House

Jeremy

Corbyn, Leader of the Labour Party, speaking at Chatham House, said:

*****Check against delivery*****

Chatham

House has been at the forefront of thinking on Britain's role in the world.

So
with the General Election less than a month away, it's a great place to set out

my approach: on how a Labour Government I lead will keep Britain safe, reshape

relationships with partners around the world, work to strengthen the United Nations and respond to the global challenges we face in the 21st century.

And I should say a warm welcome to the UN Special Representative in Somalia, Michael Keating, who is here today.

On Monday, we commemorated VE Day, the anniversary of the victory over Nazi Germany in Europe.

VE Day marked the defeat of fascism and the beginning of the end of a global war that claimed seventy million lives.

General Eisenhower, supreme commander of the Allied forces in 1944, went on to become Republican President of the United States during some of the most dangerous years of the Cold War in the 1950s.

In his final televised address to the American people as President, Eisenhower gave a stark warning of what he described as "the acquisition of unwarranted influence by the military-industrial complex."

"Only an alert and knowledgeable citizenry", he said, "can compel the proper meshing of the huge industrial and military machinery of defence with our peaceful methods and goals, so that security and liberty may prosper together."

Sadly, in the more than half a century since that speech, I think it's clear that Eisenhower's warning has not been heeded.

Too much of our debate about defence and security is one dimensional. You are either for or against what is presented as "strong defence", regardless of the actual record of what that has meant in practice.

Alert citizens or political leaders who advocate other routes to security are dismissed or treated as unreliable.

My own political views were shaped by the horrors of war and the threat of a nuclear holocaust. My parents met while organising solidarity with the elected government of Spain against Franco's fascists during the Spanish civil war.

My generation grew up under the shadow of the cold war. On television, through the 1960s and into the seventies, the news was dominated by Vietnam. I was haunted by images of civilians fleeing chemical weapons used by the United States.

I didn't imagine then that nearly fifty years later we would see chemical weapons still being used against innocent civilians. What an abject failure. How is it that history keeps repeating itself?

At the end of the cold war, when the Berlin Wall came down we were told it was the end of history. Global leaders promised a more peaceful, stable world.

It didn't work out like that.

Today the world is more unstable than even at the height of the cold war. The approach to international security we have been using since the 1990s has simply not worked.

Regime change wars in Afghanistan Iraq, Libya, and Syria – and Western interventions in Afghanistan, Somalia and Yemen – have failed in their own terms, and made the world a more dangerous place.

This is the fourth General Election in a row to be held while Britain is at war and our armed forces are in action in the Middle East and beyond.

The fact is that the 'war on terror' which has driven these interventions has failed.

They have not increased our security at home – just the opposite.

And they have caused destabilisation and devastation abroad.

Last September, the Commons Foreign Affairs Select Committee published a report on David Cameron's Libyan war.

They concluded the intervention led to political and economic collapse, humanitarian and migrant crises and fuelled the rise of Isis in Africa and across the Middle East.

Is that really the way to deliver security to the British people?

Who seriously believes that's what real strength looks like?

We need to step back and have some fresh thinking.

The world faces huge problems. As well as the legacy of regime change wars, there is a dangerous cocktail of ethnic conflicts, of food insecurity, water scarcity, the emerging effects of climate change.

Add to that mix a grotesque and growing level of inequality in which just eight billionaires own the same wealth as the 3.6 billion poorest people.

And you end up with a refugee crisis of epic proportions affecting every continent in the world. With more displaced people in the world than since the Second World War.

These problems are getting worse and fuelling threats and instability.

The global situation is becoming more dangerous.

And the new US President seems determined to add to the dangers by recklessly escalating the confrontation with North Korea, unilaterally launching missile strikes on Syria, opposing President Obama's nuclear arms deal with Iran and backing a new nuclear arms race.

A Labour Government will want a strong and friendly relationship with the United States. But we will not be afraid to speak our mind.

The US is the strongest military power on the planet by a very long way. It has a special responsibility to use its power with care and to support international efforts to resolve conflicts collectively and peacefully.

Waiting to see which way the wind blows in Washington isn't strong leadership. And pandering to an erratic Trump administration will not deliver stability.

When Theresa May addressed a Republican Party conference in Philadelphia in January she spoke in alarmist terms about the rise of China and India and of the danger of the West being eclipsed.

She said America and Britain had to 'stand strong' together and use their military might to protect their interests.

This is the sort of language that led to calamity in Iraq and Libya and all the other disastrous wars that stole the post-Cold War promise of a new world order.

I do not see India and China in those terms. Nor do I think the vast majority of Americans or British people want the boots of their young men and women on the ground in Syria fighting a war that would escalate the suffering and slaughter even further.

Britain deserves better than simply outsourcing our country's security and prosperity to the whims of the Trump White House.

So no more hand holding with Donald Trump.

A Labour Government will conduct a robust and independent foreign policy – made in Britain.

A Labour Government would seek to work for peace and security with all the other permanent members of the United Nations security council – the US, China, Russia and France.

And with other countries with a major role to play such as India, South Africa, Brazil and Germany.

The 'bomb first, talk later' approach to security has failed. To persist with it, as the Conservative Government has made clear it is determined to do, is a recipe for increasing, not reducing, threats and insecurity.

I am often asked if as prime minister I would order the use of nuclear weapons.

It's an extraordinary question when you think about it – would you order the indiscriminate killing of millions of people? Would you risk such extensive contamination of the planet that no life could exist across large parts of the world?

If circumstances arose where that was a real option, it would represent complete and cataclysmic failure. It would mean world leaders had already triggered a spiral of catastrophe for humankind.

Labour is committed actively to pursue disarmament under the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and we are committed to no first use of nuclear weapons.

But let me make this absolutely clear.

If elected prime minister, I will do everything necessary to protect the safety and security of our people and our country.

That would be my first duty.

And to achieve it, I know I will have to work with other countries to solve problems, defuse tensions and build collective

security.

The best defence for Britain is a government actively engaged in seeking peaceful solutions to the world's problems.

But I am not a pacifist.

I accept that military action, under international law and as a genuine last resort, is in some circumstances necessary.

But that is very far from the kind of unilateral wars and interventions that have almost become routine in recent times.

I will not take lectures on security or humanitarian action from a Conservative Party that stood by in the 1980s – refusing even to impose sanctions – while children on the streets of Soweto were being shot dead in the streets, or which has backed every move to put our armed forces in harm's way regardless of the impact on our people's security.

Once again, in this election, it's become clear that a vote for Theresa May could be a vote to escalate the war in Syria, risking military confrontation with Russia, adding to the suffering of the Syrian people and increasing global insecurity.

When you see children suffering in war, it is only natural to want to do something.

But the last thing we need is more of the same failed recipe that has served us so badly and the people of the region so calamitously.

Labour will stand up for the people of Syria. We will press for war crimes to be properly investigated. And we will work tirelessly to make the Geneva talks work.

Every action that is taken over Syria must be judged by whether it helps to bring an end to the tragedy of the Syrian war or does the opposite.

Even if ISIS is defeated militarily, the conflict will not end until there is a negotiated settlement involving all the main parties, including the regional and international powers and an inclusive government in Iraq.

All wars and conflicts eventually are brought to an end by political means.

So Labour would adopt a new approach. We will not step back from our responsibilities.

But our focus will be on strengthening international

co-operation and supporting the efforts of the United Nations to resolve conflicts.

A Labour Government will respect international law and oppose lawlessness and unilateralism in international relations. We believe human rights and social justice should drive our foreign policy.

In 1968, Harold Wilson's Labour Government signed the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty.

As prime minister, I hope to build on that achievement.

Labour's support for the renewal of the Trident submarine system does not preclude working for meaningful, multilateral steps to achieve reductions in nuclear arsenals.

A Labour Government will pursue a triple commitment to the interlocking foreign policy instruments of: defence, development and diplomacy.

For all their bluster, the Tory record on defence and security has been one of incompetence and failure.

They have balanced the books on the backs of servicemen and women.

Deep cuts have seen the Army reduced to its smallest size since the Napoleonic wars.

From stagnant pay and worsening conditions, to poor housing.

The morale of our service personnel and veterans is at rock bottom.

And as the security threats and challenges we face are not bound by geographic borders it is vital that as Britain leaves the EU, we maintain a close relationship with our European partners alongside our commitment to NATO and spending at least 2 per cent on defence.

That means working with our allies to ensure peace and security in Europe. We will work to halt the drift to confrontation with Russia and the escalation of military deployments across the continent.

There is no need whatever to weaken our opposition to Russia's human rights abuses at home or abroad to understand the necessity of winding down tensions on the Russia-Nato border and supporting dialogue to reduce the risk of international conflict.

We will back a new conference on security and cooperation in Europe and seek to defuse the crisis in Ukraine through

implementation of the Minsk agreements.

We will continue to work with the EU on operational missions to promote and support global and regional security.

This means our Armed Forces will have the necessary capabilities to fulfil the full range of obligations ensuring they are versatile and able to participate in rapid stabilisation, disaster relief, UN peacekeeping and conflict resolution activities.

Because security is not only about direct military defence, it's about conflict resolution and prevention, underpinned by strong diplomacy.

So the next Labour Government will invest in the UK's diplomatic networks and consular services.

We will seek to rebuild some of the key capabilities and services that have been lost as a result of Conservative cuts in recent years.

Finally, while Theresa May seeks to build a coalition of risk and insecurity with Donald Trump, a Labour Government will refocus Britain's influence towards cooperation, peaceful settlements and social justice.

The life chances, security and prosperity of our citizens are dependent on a stable international environment.

We will strengthen our commitment to the UN. But we are well aware of its shortcomings, particularly in the light of repeated abuses of the veto power in the UN Security Council.

So we will work with allies and partners from around the world to build support for UN reform in order to make its institutions more effective and responsive.

And as a permanent member of the Security Council we will provide a lead by respecting the authority of International Law.

To lead this work, Labour has created a Minister for Peace who will work across the Ministry of Defence and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

We will reclaim Britain's leading role in tackling climate change, working hard to preserve the Paris Agreement and deliver on international commitments to reduce carbon emissions.

Labour will re-examine the arms export licensing regulations to ensure that all British arms exports are consistent with our legal and moral obligations.

This means refusing to grant export licences for arms when there is a clear risk that they will be used to commit serious violations of international humanitarian law.

Weapons supplied to Saudi Arabia, when the evidence of grave breaches of humanitarian law in Yemen is overwhelming, must be halted immediately.

I see it as the next Labour's Government task, as my task, to make the case for Britain to advance a security and foreign policy with integrity and human rights at its core.

So there is a clear choice at this election.

Between continuing with the failed policy of continual and devastating military interventions, that have intensified conflicts and increased the terrorist threat.

Or being willing to step back, learn the lessons of the past and find new ways to solve and prevent conflicts.

As Dwight Eisenhower said on another occasion:

If people "can develop weapons that are so terrifying as to make the thought of global war almost a sentence for suicide, you would think that man's intelligence would include also his ability to find a peaceful solution."

And in the words of Martin Luther King "The chain reaction of evil – hate – begetting hate, wars producing more wars – must be broken, or we shall be plunged into the dark days of annihilation".

I believe we can find those solutions.

We can walk the hard yards to a better way to live together on this planet.

A Labour Government will give leadership in a new and constructive way, and that is the leadership we are ready to provide both at home and abroad.

Thank you.

New figures show that Theresa May is failing millions of NHS patients – Jonathan Ashworth

Jonathan Ashworth, Labour's Shadow Health Secretary, commenting on

NHS England Combined
Performance Statistics

for March released today, said:

"Theresa May's winter crisis is stretching into summer and it is NHS patients who are paying the price. The Tories have caused chaos in A&E and have admitted that waiting times are only going to continue to grow. The truth is that standards of care for NHS patients have collapsed this winter because years of Tory underinvestment have left staff unable to cope with rising demand, and cuts to out of hospital care have left patients stuck in hospital even when they're well enough to go home.

"Thousands more people are waiting for A&E care and routine treatment every week because of the failures of this Tory Government. Behind every one of these statistics is a patient and their family in pain because of Theresa May's refusal to give the health service the funding it needs.

"At this election only Labour are promising to give the NHS the funding it needs to deliver the standards of care which patients expect. By guaranteeing and upholding the standards of service to which patients are legally entitled under the NHS Constitution Labour will help millions of people who are being failed by Theresa May and the Conservative Government."

The Tories' failed economic plan is holding Britain back – John McDonnell

John McDonnell, Labour's Shadow Chancellor, commenting on today's Bank of England Inflation report, said:

"Today's downgraded growth, earnings and productivity forecasts and

upgraded inflations forecasts, signal bad news for living standards under the Tories.

“These forecasts from the Bank of England come on the back of disappointing growth for the first three months of the year and downgraded forecasts from leading independent forecasters for the UK economy.

“There is no hiding from the truth. The Tories’ failed economic plan is holding Britain back, and is undermining our economy and threatening working people’s living standards.

“This General Election is a choice between a Labour Party who will stand up for the many and a Tory Party which only looks after the privileged few.”

Labour says the Tories have held back Britain long enough



Labour’s

Campaign Coordinators Andrew Gwynne and Ian Lavery will today unveil a campaign poster highlighting how Britain has been held back by the Conservatives.

Ian Lavery will say:

“Millions of people feel they are living in a country where they are held back from fulfilling their potential.

“They don’t feel secure in their jobs and they can’t remember the last time they had a pay rise. Their children are struggling to learn in

crowded classrooms, and their hearts sink when they see what it costs to rent or buy a home.

“Many who have saved and planned for their retirement find they have to work longer because the state pension age is running away from them.

“The Tories have given tax breaks to the richest and big business, while failing to invest in services, skills, infrastructure and the new industries of the future.

“If the Tories are re-elected, things will only get worse. You can’t trust the Tories with your future or with the NHS, your child’s future or your pension.

“The Conservatives have held back Britain for too long. Labour will build a fairer Britain for the many not the few. We can do it together. Don’t let them hold you back.”

Labour launches National Education Service

Angela Rayner, Shadow Education Secretary, launching Labour’s plans for a cradle to grave National Education Service at Leeds City Further Education College today, said:

To the people of this country I say this – you have a clear choice on 8 June.

A choice between a Conservative Government that has let you and your children down.

Or a Labour Government that will stand up for you and provide a better education and life chances for all.

The Conservatives said they would look after our children.

But instead they’ve cut funding for our state schools, abolished the Education Maintenance Allowance and tripled Tuition Fees.

Over the past seven years, the Tories have been dismantling the incredible legacy of the last Labour Government.

As it has across the economy.

This Conservative Government has held you back.

If you're a teacher living the reality of falling investment and rising class sizes.

You're being held back.

If you're a parent – like I am – and your children aren't getting the education they deserve because class sizes are too high.

Then our children are being held back.

It's truly frightening that school budgets are being cut for the first time in over twenty years.

We're going to see a generation of our children being held back.

It never used to be like this under Labour.

Harold Wilson spoke of a new Britain forged in the white heat of the technological revolution, and Tony Blair spoke of the need to build an education system fit for a new millennium.

This is how Labour always equipped Britain to rise to new challenges; the history of Labour in power is of us giving power to people.

To fulfil their potential, to have the economic security to start a family and get on in life, and to pass on to their children more than they were given.

And education has always been at the heart of how we have delivered this.

But in the past seven years, as the Tories drag us further away from the legacy of the last Labour Government, more and more people are being held back.

Held back by an education system that, under the Conservatives, isn't giving them the support they need.

The over 800,000 young people not in education, employment, or training, who aren't able to get the skills they need to get a good job, are being held back by a Government that is not supporting them.

The nine million adults who have poor literacy, poor numeracy, or both, too often trapped in low-wage, low-skill work, struggling to make ends meet as wages stagnate and living costs rise, are being held back by a Government not giving them the support they need.

I know how it feels to be held back, because, for a long time, I was too.

If you grow up in poverty and on a run-down estate, it doesn't take much for you to feel held back.

You feel like you'll never have the same opportunities as your better off mates, for even the most basic things; you feel like education isn't for you.

You leave school without qualifications; you become a NEET, just another

statistic on Philip Hammond's spreadsheet.

Of course, in my case, I left school pregnant too, and at that point, you forget about feeling held back, and you start to worry about the most basic things.

How to make ends meet and provide for a child, how to try and give them even a little more than you had.

You do the best you can, but it can be so easy, through no fault of your own, to end up in your early adult life trapped in a cycle of deprivation, unable to get the decent wage you need to break out of it.

Slowly watching your dreams of becoming a nurse, a teacher or a scientist slip away as fantasies created by a young naive child.

But education can offer a lifeline that is simply transformative. And it shouldn't stop at a particular age in life.

Like many people, including some of my colleagues, I went back to education as an adult, to get the skills and qualifications I missed the first time.

I did that thanks to a Labour Government introducing free childcare through Sure Start and free adult learner courses at my local college.

It is difficult to say how much this changed my life, but I think I can safely say that if I hadn't done that, I wouldn't be standing here today. I left school thinking I was thick and feeling like a failure.

For too many, the transformative power of education is lost, from schools not getting the funding they need, to the debts you need to take on to return to education as an adult.

I fear that the opportunities that were there for me are not there for those who need them now.

But things can be different.

We can build a fairer, richer Britain, where opportunity and prosperity can be shared by all. That provides business with a skilled and ready British workforce.

And that is why I am proud today to announce the first stages of Labour's National Education Service.

First, we will secure the best education possible for every child, by getting the basics right, and that starts with proper funding for our schools.

We will reverse the £3 billion of cuts that our schools would face by 2020, and protect per pupil funding over the course of the Parliament.

And unlike the Tories, when we say real terms, we mean real terms.

No child will be held back by being in a school that doesn't have the staff

it needs, or can't offer the curriculum our children need.

Under Labour, every child, whatever their background, will be given the opportunity to unlock their full potential.

We will give further and technical education the parity of esteem that it deserves, not just with warm words, but with bold action.

We will give further education for 16 to 19 year olds the funding it needs, reversing seven years of managed decline under the Conservatives.

NEETs will no longer be held back, but will instead be given the support they need to go into further education, to be able to acquire the qualifications they need to get on in life.

It's vital we have lifelong learning. Learning is a ticket not just out of poverty but also out of isolation and loneliness that many of us will face at some point in our lives.

30 per cent of jobs will be affected by the rise of automation.

Up to nine million more people who will see their industries decline and their livelihoods disappear.

And if anyone thinks the Conservatives are up to the challenges that these changes to our economy will bring, I would remind them to look at what has happened in post-industrial towns across our country.

All the Conservatives did in power under Margaret Thatcher and John Major was to manage the decline of industries and left nothing but low-paid, low-skill work in its place.

Ghost towns with the heart ripped out of our communities, left to rot with little opportunities.

Theresa May is continuing Margaret Thatcher's legacy.

But there's nothing strong or stable in creating an economy that holds people back, puts a cap on their ambition and leaves them in job insecurity.

Only Labour has the vision to deliver a fairer Britain, where opportunities are available to all and prosperity is shared.

The National Education Service has been developed by the thousands of people, teachers and organisations who have spoken to me over the last 12 months either by email or in person on my many visits up and down the UK and of course in my own constituency of Ashton-under-Lyne.

The Labour Party has listened. You are at the heart of Labour's National Education Service, offering opportunity for all, to ensure that nobody – be they child or adult or community – is held back.

This will help everyone who wants to use education, to enrich their own life

and their career, moving into jobs with better wages and more security.

Education is a central pillar to Labour's plan to upgrade Britain's economy.

Because all of our businesses will benefit from Labour's plans too, as they thrive in a richer Britain.

Productivity in Britain remains stubbornly low compared to our competitors. The average German worker can make everything a British one does in a week, and take Fridays off.

It is no surprise that countries with high-quality technical education have more productive economies.

Which is why Labour will upgrade Britain's economy by ending the historic neglect of further education, giving teachers and facilities the investment they need to lead the world.

I will make sure our education system is fit for the 21st century by introducing free, life-long education in further education colleges.

Labour will abolish adult learner loans, and make all adult education free at the point of use, for all those who need it.

So adults who don't have the basic skills they need to move on and move up in life will no longer be held back by the fear of loans.

They will instead be able to return to education whenever they need it.

It will enable everyone to upskill or retrain at any point in their life.

It will correct the historic neglect of the further education sector by investing in teachers and in facilities.

And Labour will set a target for all further education teaching staff to have a teaching qualification within five years and we will back this up with financial support.

And we will increase capital investment to equip colleges to deliver T-levels and an official pre-apprenticeship trainee programme.

Beyond lifelong learning, we will transform the provision of apprenticeships.

There must be a focus on quality and not quantity.

Frankly, the number of apprenticeships does not matter if they're more about poor wages than getting a foot on the career ladder.

Currently half of all apprenticeships are below NVQ level 2 and this is simply not good enough.

So a Labour Government will shift the emphasis from quantity to quality by doubling the number of completed Level-3 apprenticeships before the end of the next Parliament.

It is only by transforming our education system that we can upgrade our economy so that nobody and no community is left behind.

And while the Tories have seen the benefits of economic growth go to a small number of the very wealthy, concentrated in the South-East, Labour will share prosperity across the country.

We will ring-fence £440 million from the apprenticeship levy to give small and medium sized companies the support they need to recruit and train highly skilled staff.

And encourage joined up thinking between local government, schools, the FE sector, and businesses, so that everyone, young and old, can leave education with a valued qualification and the skills they need to get a decent job in their local community.

And we recognise that 75 per cent of apprenticeships are delivered by independent providers and we appreciate their contribution to the sector.

And, yes, we are going to ask businesses to pay a little more in tax to fund it all.

But this is because they have their important part to play in a new deal for Britain, transforming our economy.

Quite simply, we are asking good businesses to do what they always do, to make long term investments that will yield a significant economic return.

And the Labour Party and Britain's businesses both know that as we face our exit from the European Union, upskilling our workforce to tackle the challenges we face in the years to come has never been more important.

Labour's National Education Service will give everyone in Britain, whatever their age and background, the opportunities they need to use education to transform their lives, just as it did for me.

And the businesses that help us fund it will get a highly skilled workforce, more productive, and better able to adapt to the challenges to come.

This will give them the certainty and security they need to continue to create jobs and wealth across Britain.

There can be no doubt that we face great challenges in the years to come, from Brexit, to the rise of automation, to the decline of industries that will be replaced in our economy by new, high-tech and green industries.

It takes a united approach, of individuals, of government at all levels, and of business, to respond to them, to ensure that we can deliver opportunity, security, and prosperity for all.

By offering everyone a properly funded school, a high quality technical education, and support for lifelong learning that will allow everyone to reskill, retrain, and return to education as they need to.

Quite simply, we will rise to the challenge that was laid down twenty years ago, to deliver an education service fit for a new millennium.

To deliver richer lives for our people and a richer Britain for us all.

A National Education Service delivering hope and prosperity.

For the many not the few.

Ends